

REMARKS

Claims 2-7, 9, 11-24, and 26 are pending and under consideration in the above-identified application and Claims 1, 8, 10 and 25 were previously cancelled.

In the Office Action, Claims 2-7, 9, 11-24, and 26 were rejected.

In the Amendment, Claims 9, 11 and 18 are amended and Claims 27 – 29 are added. Claims 27-29 are supported by at least paragraph [0040] of the specification. No new matter has been introduced as a result of this Amendment.

Accordingly, Claims 2-7, 9, 11-24, and 26 – 29 are at issue.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants would like to note that the changes to the claims were made solely for the purpose of more particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which Applicants regard as their invention.

I. Interview Summary

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended to Applicants' agent, Kader Gacem, in expediting the schedule for an interview and for the interviews held on June 16, 2008 and June 18, 2008.

During the first interview, Applicants' agent and the Examiner discussed the rejections under 35 U.S.C § 103(a). The Examiner and Applicants' agent discussed independent Claims 9, 11 and 18.

With respect to claim 9, Applicants' agent explained that the "method of interactive processing of a document to be completed by more than one user" was distinguishable from the cited references, Slater and Yankovich. In fact, each one of these two references teaches that each second and subsequent user is limited to enter in the document only a signature and/or an endorsement (approval), but not required to enter "non-signature information" as recited in the claims of the present application.

Applicants' agent further commented that each of claims 11 and 18 also recites the above-discussed feature of claim 9.

The Examiner indicated that she will need to review the specifications of the present application and of the cited references before commenting on the above-discussed feature, and looked forward to Applicants filed response in order to better follow Applicants arguments.

II. Double Patenting

Claims 9, 11 and 18 were provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 8 and 10 of copending Application No. 11/172,743.

Without acquiescing in the merits of the rejection, Applicants reserve the right to file an appropriate Terminal Disclaimer upon the issuance of the copending application. The rejection thus has been overcome.

III. 35 U.S.C. § 103 Obviousness Rejection of Claims 1-6, 9, 11, and 13-15

Claims 2-7, 9, 11-24, and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Slater et al.* (“*Slater*”) (U.S. Patent No. 6,796,489) in view of *Yankovich et al.* (“*Yankovich*”) (U.S. Patent No. 6,704,906). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Slater is directed to systems and methods for processing or recording electronic documents that have embedded digital signatures, and *Yankovich* is directed to a self-directed routable electronic form generation system and method where each user in the process defines the next user, or all subsequent user routing.

The Examiner stated that *Slater* teaches “receiving of at least one response from the second user to the at least one request and points to Column 3, lines 13 – 16 for support. However, *Slater* discloses in Column 3, lines 3 – 16, that (emphasis added):

“The electronic documents can be processed when they are received by reconstructing the electronic document to a previous state. *In the case of electronic documents being recorded, the content of the electronic document as digitally signed by the notary public digital is usually verified. If verification is successful, the recorder is able to insert endorsement data into the digital document and record the electronic document. Finally, the recorder digitally signs the electronic document using a recorder signature block that was already provided in the electronic document and generates a receipt that is also digitally signed by the recorder.* In addition, the recorded electronic document and the digitally signed receipt are returned to the originator that is identified in routing information that was included in the electronic document.”

That is, in *Slater* the recorder (second user) is limited to entering endorsement (approval) data, signing and recording the electronic document. As such, *Slater* fails to teach or suggest the “non-signature information received from the second user being independent of the non-

signature information obtained from the at least one response from the first user,” as recited in Claims 9, 11 and 18.

Further, the Examiner stated that *Yankovich* teaches sending at least one request determined from the selected document to a second user at a second location on a computer network, and pointed to Figure 1, 120/122, and Figure 9, 37H, for support. However, as the Examiner acknowledged the at least one request to the second user is limited to user approvals and to signatures for approvals. Thus, *Yankovich* also fails to teach or suggest that the “non-signature information received from the second user being independent of the non-signature information obtained from the at least one response from the first user,” as recited in Claims 9, 11 and 18.

Thus, independent claims 9, 11 and 18 are patentable over *Slater* in view of *Yankovich*, either alone or in any known combination.

Claims 2-7, 12- 18, 19 – 24, and 26 depend, directly or indirectly, from one of the independent claims 9, 11 or 18. As discussed above, because claims 9, 11 and 18 are patentable over *Slater* in view of *Yankovich*, therefore, claims 2-7, 12- 18, 19 – 24, and 26 are also patentable over *Slater* in view of *Yankovich*, for at least the same reasons.

New claims 27 – 29, dependent on patentable claims 9, 11 and 18, respectively, are also patentable over *Slater* in view of *Yankovich*, for at least the same reasons.

Moreover, each one of these new claims recites that “the first user provides contact information for the second user so as to send the at least one request from the selected document to the second user.” This “contact information” limitation, which is supported in paragraph [0040] of the present application, is not taught or suggested by either one of or a combination of the two cited references. Thus, claims 27 – 29 are also patentable over *Slater* in view of *Yankovich*, for at least this reason.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that these claim rejections be withdrawn.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above Amendment and Remarks, Applicants submit that Claims 2-7, 9, 11-24, and 26 – 29 are clearly allowable over the cited prior art, and respectfully requests early and favorable notification to that effect.

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Respectfully submitted,



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